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11 April 1972

MEMORANDUM

FROM : The Youth Working Committee of the Human
Resources Study Group

SUBJECT : The Generation Gap in CIA

1. The idea of the generation as a basic historical determinant is more than 2,000 years old in the West. It has been increasingly accepted during the last 50 years and the philosopher Ortega went so far as to claim that it is the "fundamental concept of history." It is axiomatic that succeeding generations perceive problems and situations very differently, but Ortega believed that revolutionary change occurs when "decisive" generations view the world from radically new perspectives. Many observers today believe that radical youthful activism has reached decisive proportions. They assert that the "new left" is not a transient phenomenon--but the first wash of a vital historical force.

2. We in CIA are not immune to the generational dynamics of American society at large. We must respond to the elected officials who more and more will be representative of the younger generation. And we will have to understand and respond to the younger generation itself and to its role in our changing domestic environment if we are to continue to be viable. As a first step in this adjustment, the Agency must do a better job of assimilating and motivating its own young in order to be vital and relevant in the 1970's and 80's. Management has already taken steps in this direction and a certain degree of optimism has been generated in the last year or so. We have interpreted our mandate from the former Executive Director-Comptroller to study the "youth issue" as an indication of management's concern about our changing professional population.

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3. We have intensively researched the younger generation in CIA since last August. Formal interviews were conducted with about 60 junior officers who were selected at random from components throughout the Agency. Informally, we met with about an equal number of junior officers. Formal interviews with managers at all levels and from all major components were also conducted.

4. We found no signs of a youthful counterculture in CIA. With few exceptions, the junior officers we talked to are mature and responsible professionals who constructively discussed their complaints. We did not discover a set of problems unique to our younger generation, although an elaborate catalogue of complaints was revealed. A large majority of the junior officers identified three central problems. They complained about their inability to plan their own careers and about the Agency's lack of commitment to a systematic program of personnel development. Many feel locked and isolated in their narrow career services and complained that there are few opportunities for lateral assignments. A large majority complained about poor communications in CIA. Though many recognized the need for compartmentation, they feel that lateral and downward channels of communication are clogged. Many also complained about outdated management techniques, particularly at the branch level.
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5. These are not new complaints. We discovered that middle and senior level officials also identify them as central problems and we realize that they have been prevalent for a long time. The same three issues were the major problems articulated by a large majority of the 550 middle level officers who were polled two years ago in an intensive attitudinal survey done by an IG committee. In addition, they are the same issues repeatedly identified in mid-career and senior training courses. It appears, however, that despite the frequent reiteration of these complaints, relatively little has been done about them. We realize that they exist partly because of the unique nature of our work and because of the need to separate various intelligence functions. We must point them out again, however, since they were so strongly emphasized by the junior officers we talked to.

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6. There may in fact be an increasing urgency about these problems. They are more irritating, especially to younger officers, because they have been prevalent and largely ignored for so long. Many of the junior officers we interviewed are cynical, impatient, or agitated because they believe the Agency is unwilling to change. Many waver in their commitment to CIA and intelligence careers because of what they see as intractable, unresponsive management. There are similarities between their restlessness and the attitudes that led [REDACTED] Marchetti, and others to abandon their careers, as well as to the attitudes of involved young Americans in general. If we are to maintain the high level of competence and loyalty of our young professionals we must begin to make basic changes.

7. It is beyond the capabilities of this working committee to recommend specific remedies for the problems we have discovered. Many senior officials have begun taking steps in their own components to introduce change. We were apprised of techniques used in certain offices to improve communications, career development, and management. In addition, the MAG, the "junior officers study group," and others have made specific recommendations for change. We believe, however, that these efforts and the Agency suffer from lack of unity and cohesive direction and that innovations and recommendations should be more centrally coordinated by management. Successful new programs adopted in one office probably could be used elsewhere.

8. Rather than make detailed recommendations, we would like to propose that top management adopt an approach used successfully by the State Department. Under the direction of Deputy Under-Secretary Macomber, a group of 250 professionals in 13 task forces was charged with developing a program of modernization for the Department. This effort culminated in November 1970 in the "Macomber Report" (Diplomacy for the Seventies). Many of the recommendations already have been successfully implemented.


9. We strongly recommend that a "mini-Macomber" commission be established by CIA to review the problems our committee has identified and to study means of remedying them. A group of senior officials from all the

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directorates and major components should be constituted under the direction of the Executive Director to sit as the core committee. It would then delegate specific studies to task forces chaired by a senior officer and staffed by professionals of all ranks. Each task force could study problems such as communications, career development, the selection and development of managers, the role of professional women, grievances, etc. The senior committee should have authority to recommend and implement change across office and directorate boundaries. We believe that enough has now been conclusively learned about some of the Agency's basic problems and that the time is right for management to consider ways of solving them.

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Western Hemisphere Division, OCI

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Walsh

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Attached is the concluding memo on the Human Resources Study Group youth survey that I promised. It is the coordinated statement of the four directorate representatives who as you know did all the interviewing and the lion's share of the work for the group. Our memo is to be discussed by the larger Group Thursday afternoon. We will propose that it be forwarded to Mr. Colby and the deputies before their meeting on this subject.

Since I drafted the memo and was the original advocate of the recommendations it makes, I feel that it is also appropriate to submit it to you as my latest report on the progress of the group.

I look forward to discussing (DATE) *RF* it and the survey with you tomorrow.

FORM NO. 101 REPLACES FORM 10-101
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